

MSIC Consumer Action Group – Nothing About Us Without Us

*MSIC Consumer Action Group*¹

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Introduction / Issues:

The Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) opened in 2001 as a compassionate, low threshold health service that seeks to connect with and provide care for people who inject drugs.

Consumer participation (CP) in health care ensures consumers are meaningfully involved in service planning, policy development and service delivery. CP in drug treatment and harm reduction settings has occurred with varying degrees of consistency.

Method / Approach:

This consumer-led presentation will detail the background to forming the Consumer Action Group (CAG) at MSIC, the facilitators and constraints to CAG function, key successes and implications for CP in other harm reduction services.

Key Findings:

The CAG was initiated in June 2015 in response to client and staff feedback regarding the need for improved consumer involvement in the service. Key achievements include peer-led take home naloxone (THN) training, the production of a client newsletter and input into; the annual 'Art From the Heart' exhibition and auction of client artworks; Uniting legislative drug law reform submissions; and service-related research at MSIC. Some of the constraints on CAG function include member capacity (with increasing time demands) and operating within a medical model of care. Informal evaluation of the CAG shows improved member self-esteem. A recent satisfaction survey showed clients perceived CAG membership as an opportunity for personal growth and direction.

Discussions and Conclusions:

Implementing a CAG into a low threshold harm reduction service is not without its challenges. However, the benefits to consumer confidence, 'voice' in the community and improved policies, practices and service for consumers as a result, cannot be overstated.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

The authors have no interests to declare.